

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Replacement sheets for Figures 1-11 are attached to this reply. Applicant asserts no new matter has been introduced by way of these replacement sheets and that these replacement sheets are in accordance with 37 CFR §1.84.

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 23-36 are pending in the present patent application. Claims 23 and 30 are independent. The remaining claims depend, either directly or indirectly, from claims 23 and 30.

Drawing Objections

The Examiner objects to the drawings filed on November 13, 2006. Replacement sheets for Figures 1-11 are attached to this reply. Applicant respectfully asserts that no new matter has been introduced by way of these replacement sheets and that these replacement sheets are in accordance with 37 CFR §1.84. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner acknowledge these formal drawings and indicate whether they are acceptable.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 23-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,615,217 issued to Rosensteel et al. (hereinafter "Rosensteel") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,842,898 issued to Carlson et al. (hereinafter "Carlson"). For the reasons set forth below, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As evidenced by the enclosed 37 C.F.R. §1.131 declaration and attached submissions, the claimed invention (i) was conceived on or before February 1, 2001, which is prior to the earliest effective filing date of Rosensteel, *i.e.*, prior to June 29, 2001, and (ii) was

subsequently constructively reduced to practice with due diligence exercised by the inventor. Accordingly, Rosensteel is not prior art to the present application and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection is respectfully requested.

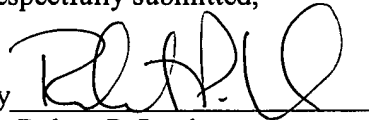
Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 16159/089001).

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Respectfully submitted,

By



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Attachments — 37 CFR §1.131 Declaration
Replacement Sheets: FIGS. 1-11